



SALISBURY POLICE DEPARTMENT

An Internationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

Press Release

For Immediate Release
June 7, 2017

SALISBURY, N.C., (Wednesday, June 7, 2017) -- The Salisbury Police Department was notified today by Brandy Cook, the District Attorney for Rowan County Prosecutorial District 19C, that upon the application of the law, and the subsequent facts in this case, criminal charges would not be filed in the officer-involved shooting death of Mr. Ferguson Laurent Jr.

This unfortunate incident occurred on November 3, 2016. On this date, members of the department's Special Response Team attempted to serve a "no-knock" search warrant, resulting from the finding of a three-month criminal investigation related to robbery and narcotics offenses. During the service of the search warrant an exchange of gunfire occurred between Mr. Laurent and Officer Karl Boehm. Laurent was subsequently critically injured. Emergency medical personnel accompanied the Special Response Team during the service of the search warrant, and rendered immediate first-aid; however Laurent succumbed to his injuries.

"The top priority of the Salisbury Police Department is to ensure the protection of constitutional rights for all citizens," said Salisbury Police Chief Jerry Stokes. "This includes the health, safety, and well-being of all members of the community. The department will continue to be responsive to citizen's concerns regarding quality of life and crime issues within Salisbury. The shooting of Ferguson Laurent Jr. was tragic for our entire community. This also includes the police department, for we are also members of this great community. It is never the intention of an officer to be involved in the death of another person, and no officer serving the warrant on November 3 went there with the intent to harm anyone."

Throughout the country we have witnessed the deaths of people of color during interactions with members of law enforcement. In some of these cases the actions of police were legally and morally justified, in others the actions of police were an embarrassment to the entire law enforcement profession. Regardless of the circumstances, these deaths affect us all. This incident and others like it are a call to our nation that we must ensure justice is properly and constitutionally served. By serving our citizens justly then we can increase police legitimacy and cooperation, which ensures our community is a healthy and safe environment to raise our children.

As a result of the District Attorney's decision that Officer Boehm's actions were legal, and that his use of force was justified in self-defense, or in the defense of others according to N.C.G.S 15A-401(d)(2), he remains employed with the Salisbury Police Department. It should be noted that an intensive internal review of this incident will be conducted by the professional standards section to determine if any departmental policy violations occurred.



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We appreciate the District Attorney and State Bureau of Investigation's (SBI) thorough and diligent review of this incident. The report completed by the District Attorney and SBI, when reviewed, will be instrumental in providing insight into the details of the incident.

While we have already implemented a number of changes to our policies and procedures, we will continue to review all practices and build on those changes to make a better police department. Some of our policy changes include:

- Strive to ensure the demographics of the Salisbury Police Department reflect that of the Salisbury community.
- The creation of a "Chief's Citizen Advisory Board" to build a representative dialogue with the community.
- The suspension of all "no-knock" search warrants without the approval of the Deputy Chief or the Chief of Police.
- The departmental wide implementation of implicit bias training.
- The creation of a Crisis Negotiations Team, which will allow officers to better utilize communication as a tool to prevent uses of force.
- The creation of a detailed threat assessment process, which must be completed and reviewed by a commanding officer prior to the service of any search warrant to properly identify any threats to the safety of the officers or public.
- The creation of a strategic plan to address crime and community engagement concerns.
- The commission of a community survey to determine how the police department can better serve and protect the community.

The events of November 3, 2016 have affected our community in many ways. As we transition to the internal review phase of this process our goal is to evaluate our policies and procedures while continuing to engage our community through the continued practice of community oriented policing.

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